

CRIMINAL APPEAL

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## ***General Denies He Took Money From Spy Fund for Personal Use***

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla., July 15 (UPI) — A retired Air Force major general who is charged with embezzling Government funds testified today that he never took money for his own personal use from a secret espionage fund.

The defendant, Maj. Gen. Richard B. Collins, told the jury that all the money he withdrew from the spy fund went for travel expenses and "payment to individuals for covert intelligence operations."

General Collins is accused of diverting \$450,000 from secret accounts and embezzling \$19,000 in interest.

As the trial in Federal District Court entered its second week, the General was questioned today by his attorney, Stephen Bronis.

### ***'I'm Not a Thief'***

"General Collins, are you a thief?" Mr. Bronis asked.

"No, I'm not a thief," responded General Collins.

"Were you ever a thief?" the attorney asked.

"No," said the general.

General Collins, 55 years old, testified that he made two withdrawals from accounts established in 1968 to finance spy operations in North Vietnam, North Korea and China.

He said that he once withdrew an unspecified amount to go to "location A," which he described as a secret base in the United States that "maintains technical and electronic evaluation of permanent Eastern Bloc aircraft, radar and submarines." He said he also withdrew \$8,654 to pay "an individual for covert intelligence information."

Federal District Judge James C. Paine then ordered the defendant not to answer further questions on that subject.

The general said he twice transferred money from his personal account at the Swiss Bank in Geneva to the secret account to maintain a \$450,000 balance in the Government ac-

count and avoid suspicion from auditors. He said that the transfers left his personal account \$4,000 short but that he never sought reimbursement.

### ***Closing Out the Account***

The general testified that he asked to close the account because "Watergate was still reverberating around Washington."

"When gossip gets going and anyone hears the Air Force is carrying a secret bank account, people are going to ask why and who is responsible," he said.

He said Gen. George S. Brown, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, authorized him to close the fund but General Collins said the Air Force was unwilling to take the money back. He said he had to "take another route" to return the money. Earlier testimony indicated the Central Intelligence Agency helped close out the account.

The general said he retired in April 1978, a few days after President Carter appointed Gen. David C. Jones to succeed General Brown as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. General Brown has since died.

General Collins said he retired because he had a "very bad relationship with General Jones," who he said might not have known about the secret accounts.